



வடகிழக்கு மனித உரிமைகள் செயலகம்

North East Secretariat on Human Rights - NESOHR

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Report on the aerial bombing of Puthukkudiyiruppu town - 15 & 16 June

Puthukkudiyiruppu (PTK) is the biggest and the busiest town in the Mullaithivu district. On 15 and 16 June 2008, Sri Lankan bombers conducted extensive aerial raid over this town. Four civilians were killed and a further 10 were injured in the attack on the 15th.

School, hospital, temple, market, commerce buildings and homes were damaged. PTK MV School, Zonal Education Office, PTK hospital and Sri Kanthasamy Murugan temple sustained damages. Seven homes were completely damaged and a further 25 homes sustained some damages.



Terrified children: The section of the population most affected by the two days of raid was mostly children. On Sunday, 15th, classes were being held at the temple for children aged 5-15. These children screamed and ran in all directions since the temple grounds usually do not have many bunkers.

The day was also a children's clinic day at the PTK hospital and there were many children. They too had to seek protection. The hospital theatre lighting and ceiling shattered to the ground as doctors were operating.

A community of recently displaced people from Nedunkerni was among the affected. A small shrapnel piece lodged into the thighs of a toddler among them as he suckled his mother.

The PTK MV School was to host a Karate competition that day and there were children gathering for this. They also had to disperse in all directions in panic.

The next day, on 16th the attendance at PTK MV School was so low that the principal sent all the children home and cancelled all the classes. However, a Tamil Day competition for the region was also arranged to be held in this school on Monday 16th. This was about to start when two aerial raids forty minutes apart took place. Students waiting to take part in the competition were so badly affected that the competition was cancelled by the Zonal Director of Education. Several students and teachers

fainted due fear and the noise of bombers. Four students who fainted had to be taken to the hospital.

Killed and injured: The serious casualties of death and injuries occurred among the Nedunkerni displaced community and the occupants of the private homes in PTK.

Killed



Name: Thavarasa Banushan (M)
Age: 19 years
Address: Visuvamadhu



Name: Subramaniam Suhanthan (M)
Age: 19 years
Address: Jeevanagar, Muththaiyankaddu



Name: Velu Nahathambirarasa (M)
Age: 20 years
Address: Punnaineeraviyadi, Visuvamadu, PTK



Name: Iyathurai Sundaralingam (M)
Age: 47 years
Address: Ward-1, PTK

Injured

1. Jeyamohini (F pregnant), age (32 years) of Puthukkudiyiruppu, Ward-1
2. Rengasamy Thankarasa (M), age (42 years) of Nesankudiyiruppu
3. P Asokan (M), age (41 years) of Venavil
4. R Pathnathan (M) age (70 years) of Venavil
5. Kalaithevan (M), age (36) of Puthukkudiyiruppu
6. Luchumanan (M), age(58 years) of Katchilaimadu
7. Thinesh (M), age (18 years) of Puthukkudiyiruppu, Ward-2
8. Chandran (M) age (52 years) of Puthukkudiyiruppu, Ward-10
9. Parpuhalan (M) age (21 years) of Iranaipalai
10. Vinothan (M) age (25 years) of Iranaipalai

Other victims: Many of those injured in the bombing were recently displaced from Nedunkerni due to shelling and were living in very poor conditions. Rengasamy Thangarasa, one of the displaced and injured said,

“We displaced from Nedunkerni on the 12th June due to the constant shelling there and came here. Now three days after coming here this happens to us. I was at home looking after the children. I have six children. When we heard the bombers, I was

putting the children in the bunker and before I could get in, the bombers started dropping the bombs. I was badly injured in the leg and I could not move. My wife and children carried me into the bunker. Only after a long time, with the help of a neighbor, I was taken to this hospital. I work for daily wages to take care of my family. All my children go to school. The youngest is just seven months. What are they going to do now, after displacing and then me getting injured like this?"

Another displaced father, Senthurmurukan Akkines, who lost their shelter said,



"I have five children and all of them go to school. The children were at home because it was Sunday. I was at the market when the bombers came. Everyone in town was running in all directions. We fell into the canals by the side of the road. After the bombers left and when I looked I saw big smoke coming from the direction of my home and I ran there. I was relieved to find my mother and my five children safe and lying under a tree. I left them there and went to the house hoping to lock it. There was no trace of my home. Now my entire family does not have even a change of clothes".

Zonal Director of Education records damages: The Zonal Director of Education for the area, M Thevendram, expressed his frustration at the problems faced by the students in pursuing their education as follows,

"The students face numerous hurdles in their education. Not receiving textbooks in time and frequent displacements are already causing problems for their education. The continuing aerial attacks also disturb their learning. The claymore attacks are making them hesitate to go further to other schools to take part in competitions".

He also recorded the following damages to the educational establishments under him in his report sent to the Education Department. In the PTK MV School, the office door, eight tube lights from the computer room, two computers, 12 glass windows of the science laboratory, eight ceiling sheets and two glass windows from the auditorium were shattered. In his Zonal Education Office, wall glasses of the finance room, wall of the School Division, and window glasses of the Teacher Advisors room were broken.

Media blockade: A bombing raid that caused such extensive damages, casualties and panic hardly made a ripple in the international media. This demonstrates the degree of blockade of media from the worst affected areas in the Tamil homeland.